Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction

30 November 2017

English only

2017 Meeting
Geneva, 4-8 December 2017
Item 6 of the provisional agenda
Issues of substance and process for the period before the next Review Conference, with a view to reaching consensus on an intersessional process

The mantra of confidence building: proposal for the 2018-2020 Intersessional Process

Submitted by Germany, co-sponsored by Japan and the United States of America

I. Introduction

1. Over the years, States Parties from all regional groups have repeatedly emphasised the importance of the exchange of information among States Parties through the Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs), as agreed at the Second and Third Review Conferences and updated at the Seventh Review Conference. The value of the exchange of information carried out under these measures — namely to enhance transparency and build confidence — is a mantra of the Final Documents of Review Conferences.

2. The Seventh and Eighth Review Conferences noted the desirability of making the CBMs more user-friendly and stressed the need to ensure that they provide relevant and appropriate information.

3. The Sixth Review Conference tasked the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) with developing an electronic format for CBM forms. The Seventh and Eighth Review Conferences, *mutatis mutandis*, authorised the ISU to continue relevant activities.

II. Proposal for the 2018–2020 Intersessional Process

4. The Seventh Review Conference decided to pay special attention to the CBMs in the Meetings of Experts and Meetings of States Parties in 2012 and 2013. The outcome of the discussions at these meetings was neither addressed nor considered in depth at the Eighth Review Conference. Just as little note was taken of CBM working papers submitted to the Preparatory Committee of the Eighth Review Conference and to the Eighth Review Conference.

5. The 2017 Meeting of States Parties was given a mandate by the Eighth Review Conference to seek progress on issues of substance and process for the period before the next Review Conference, with a view to reaching consensus on an intersessional process.

6. The CBMs are the only substantive commitment agreed by all States Parties to the Convention to enable the building of confidence through transparency. Maintaining and

GE.17-21169(E)

Please recycle

improving the value of the CBMs' trust-building capacities requires an in-depth discussion on existing and new CBM forms during the 2018–2020 Intersessional Process. In addition, future steps with regard to submitting the CBMs electronically, which may be the best way to increase participation in the annual exchange of CBMs, are to be discussed.

7. The importance and further development of CBMs should be discussed during the 2018–2020 Intersessional Process, preferably as a standing agenda item in a working group on national implementation. This discussion needs to take into account the numerous working papers submitted to the Preparatory Committee and the Eighth Review Conference, notably:

- **BWC/CONF.VIII/PC/WP.6/Rev.1** — Strengthening confidence building and consultative mechanisms under the Biological Weapons Convention. Submitted by the United States of America.
- **BWC/CONF.VIII/PC/WP.35** — Strengthening confidence-building measures in regard to dual use materials. Submitted by Germany.
- **BWC/CONF.VIII/PC/WP.36** — Step-by-step approach in CBM participation (2016). Submitted by Australia, Canada, Japan, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, and Switzerland.
- **BWC/CONF.VIII/WP.9** — Proposal to enhance the format of confidence-building measures under the Biological Weapons Convention. Submitted by the Russian Federation.

In addition, any other new ideas that may help to increase confidence in compliance and facilitate the annual submission of CBM reports should be included in the discussions.

8. Finally, the Ninth Review Conference in 2021 should take decisions on proposed new and improved existing CBM forms based on the outcome of the discussions during the Intersessional Process.